

FLIGHT

The
**AIRCRAFT
ENGINEER
&
AIRSHIPS**

First Aeronautical Weekly in the World. Founded January, 1909

Founder and Editor : **STANLEY SPOONER**

A Journal devoted to the Interests, Practice, and Progress of Aerial Locomotion and Transport

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ROYAL AERO CLUB OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

No. 994. (No. 2. Vol. XX.)

JANUARY 12, 1928

Weekly, Price 6d.
Post free, 7d.

Flight

The Aircraft Engineer and Airships

Editorial Offices : 36, GREAT QUEEN STREET, KINGSWAY, W.C.2

Telephone : Gerrard 1828. Telegrams : Truditur, Westcent, London.

Annual Subscription Rates, Post Free.

United Kingdom .. 30s. 4d. Abroad 33s 0d.*

*Foreign subscriptions must be remitted in British currency.

CONTENTS

Editorial Comment :	PAGE
Formula Racing	15
Hard Luck	16
Blackburn Ripon II	17
Dornier "Super-Wal"	18
New Koolhoven Light 'Plane	19
Empire Airship Mission	20
New Light 'Plane Records by Czechoslovakia	21
Private Flying : Flying Club Progress in 1927	22
Light 'Plane Clubs	24
Central States "Monocoupe"	25
Pratts' Ethyl Fuel	26
New Wireless Station at Croydon	26
Airisms from the Four Winds	27
Reviews of Books	28
Royal Air Force	29
R.A.F. Development	29
Personals	30

EDITORIAL COMMENT



ENEFITING from the lesson of last year, when the handicap formula used for estimating the racing speeds of machines proved to rule out nearly all the fast types, we understand that the subject of this year's formula is now being discussed by the authorities concerned, and that the formula suggested is, with very minor alterations, that designed by Mr. C. C. Walker, and described by him in the

Formula Racing

September 22, 1927, issue of the AIRCRAFT ENGINEER (Technical Supplement to FLIGHT). The value of the constant "K" and the biplane span allowance have been slightly modified, but the change is so small that for all practical purposes the suggested formula is Mr. Walker's original one.

It may be recollected that Mr. Walker chose span rather than area (*i.e.*, "span power" rather than "wing power") as his basis mainly because, as he put it, "span is the dimension for which there is no substitute." In other words, so long as formula racing is used there will be efforts to "cheat" the formula (we use the expression, of course, without any intention of inferring any dishonourable action, and merely as it is used in yacht racing, to imply "beating" the formula), and it is therefore essential that the formula chosen should be such that in trying to "cheat" it the qualities developed by the "cheating" should be desirable ones. Mr. Walker claimed, it may be remembered, that if wing area were used, the tendency would probably be to increase chord so as to get a low figure for "wing power" (horse-power per square foot) without thereby sacrificing very much actual speed, thus obtaining a lower handicap speed. Now, adding chord can be done as a piece of "faking," and does not entail any great structural alterations; but an increase in chord is not particularly desirable. Mr. Walker chose span because, as he said, "increase of chord is no cure for an overloaded machine, but increase of span is." In other words, span is a desirable feature in any machine, although it is not, perhaps, very important in a pure racing craft. But, coming back to the formula, if a formula tends to produce some "freakish" feature,

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DIARY OF CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Club Secretaries and others desirous of announcing the dates of important fixtures are invited to send particulars for inclusion in this list :-

1928

Feb. 1 "Aircraft in Small Wars." Wing-Comdr. R. H. Peck, before Royal United Services Inst.

Aug. 6 Air League Challenge Cup

Sept. — Schneider Trophy Race.

Oct. 7-28 International Aircraft Exhibition, Berlin.

1929

Oct. 31 Guggenheim Safe-Aircraft Competition Closes.